Achievements of CSIR

1077. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the scientific and technological achievements of CSIR during the last two years; and

(b) their contribution towards chemical synthesis of DNA and pollution control?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) and (b) CSIR has to its credit significant scientific and technological achievements over the past two years, specially, in the areas of Chemicals, Petrochemical, Polymers, Health care, Biotechnology and Leather. However, in the chemical synthesis of DNA and pollution control its contributions have been as follows:

Chemical Synthesis of DNA:

(i) Developed a new universal polymer support system replacing eight prederivatised polymer supports required for DNA & RNA synthesis.

(ii) Established several modifications in nucleosides using microwave techniques.

(iii) Evolved reduced deprotection time for protected monomers of DNA.

Pollution Control:

(i) Developed several instruments like dust sampler, controlled sequential air sampler etc.

(ii) Developed processes for microbial desulphurization of coal, oil and sour gases; microbial de-emulsifier and biodegradable plastics; biological treatment of coke oven effluents in steel plants; solar energy based industrial waste water treatment system using anoxygenic phototrophis bacteria, bioremediation of mine soil dumps, treatment of petroleum refinery waste water etc.

(iii) Designed and installed Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETPs) for leather tanneries and textiles units, recovery and reuse of chromium sulphate from tannery effluence etc.

Scientists' concern over Ethical Impact of Gene patenting

1078. SHRI SANJAY DALMIA: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Scientists concerned over ethical impact of gene patenting" appearing in the Business Standard, dated May 27, 1997; and

(b) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Societies all over the world are concerned over the private utilisation of genetic biodiversity by highly knowledge based organisations like Multi Nationals. Individual countries are framing rules to protect their genetic biodiversity in accordance with the "Rio Declaration 1992". India is also in the process of framing its Biodiversity Conservation Laws.

Expertise of CBRI to Construct Low Cost Hotels

1079. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Building Research Institute, Roorkee has offered its expertise to construct low cost hotels,

if so, whether Government have given their approval to CBRI to extend its consultancy service to entrepreneurs;

(b) how does the cost of CBRI differ from the estimates of CPWD or State PWDs; and

(c) what is the reaction to the said proposal by the Ministry of Tourism?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Patenting rights of Neem

1080. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have successfully fought a case against patenting of the healing effects of turmeric (Haldi) by certain MNCs; if so, the details of the case and the outcome thereof; and

(b) whether similar patenting rights in respect of Neem and its healing effects on human body have also been challenged in so far as researches on Neem and its healing effects have been made in India since vedic era; if so, the steps taken in the matter and the results thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) A US patent (No. 5401504) on use of Turmeric in wound healing was granted in May, 1995 to Suman K. Das and Hari Her P. Cohly of USA and assigned to University of Missisippi Medical Centre, USA. The said patent claimed a method of promoting healing of a wound in a patient using turmeric powder through topical as well as oral administration. Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, India filed re-examination proceedings against the above patent at United States patents and Trademarks office (USPTO) on October 28, 1996 based on prior art which was collected, documented and submitted at USPTO. On re-examination, the USPTO gave a final rejection to all the six claims of the above stated patent. The patentees are understood to have filed a response as per provisions of the US patent law.

(b) As per available information, US patents granted in respect of NEEM are not for the use of Neem perse as a healing agent in human beings but of the active compounds isolated therefrom. Government is not aware of any formal efforts to challenge the grant of such patents for neem at USPTO.

Permission to U.S. Company for setting up 100 per cent Subsidiary in India

1081. SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have permitted the U.S. Company, Cray Research Inc., to set up a 100 per cent subsidiary in India;

(b) if so, the functions this subsidiary will perform;

(c) whether the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR) and some other science organisations had opposed this approval and if so, the grounds thereof; and

(d) the reasons for rejection of their plea?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Indian subsidiary, inter-alia, will provide support to Cray Research customers and will promote its products and services. It will be headed by a